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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- DATE PARAGRAPH 3

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [ETTC](#) [AORC](#) [CH](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: MFA SAYS NO CHANGE IN CHINA'S POSITION ON NUCLEAR  
SUPPLIER GROUP DRAFT EXCEPTION FOR INDIA

REF: BEIJING 3102

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.  
4 (b/d).

People's Daily criticizes U.S.-India Nuclear Deal  
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¶1. (U) A September 1 commentary in the Chinese Communist Party official mouthpiece People's Daily by Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Associate Researcher Fan Jishe called a U.S. proposal to provide an exception for India to Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) full-scope safeguard provisions a "double standard on nonproliferation." In the article, Fan stated that "in order to advance geopolitical and commercial interests, the United States is asking the NSG to open a 'back door' for India" and criticized the U.S. draft text as being "vague" on nonproliferation concerns.

MFA tells us no change in PRC position  
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¶2. (C) PolOff called MFA Arms Control and Disarmament Department Nuclear Division Deputy Director Zhang Shen on September 2 regarding Fan's commentary to ask if the commentary reflected a change in China's position (see reftel). Zhang told PolOff that the commentary reflects Fan's "private views only" and does not represent the Chinese Government position. Zhang emphasized that China has not changed its position on the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative. China understands India's need to develop its civil nuclear energy capabilities but also hopes that the international community will maintain nonproliferation standards. China hopes, said Zhang, that the NSG will find a "balanced approach" to these two priorities.

MFA press spokesperson reiterates PRC position  
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¶3. (U) During the regular MFA press briefing September 2, MFA spokesperson Jiang Yu responded to questions regarding the commentary. Jiang said she had not seen the article, but added that China hopes the NSG will find a way to "strike a balance" between nuclear nonproliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. When asked if China plans to support the U.S.-circulated draft exception for India, Jiang responded that, "all countries have a right to peaceful nuclear energy and China takes a positive view of the work of the NSG."

Comment  
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14. (C) China's position on the U.S.-India nuclear deal has long been one of calculated ambiguity. If the September 1 "commentary" in an authoritative Party media organ is a sign of an impending or considered change in China's position, officials are not yet admitting it.

RANDT